Greetings church,

Last week, I ended my chapter report with the sentence, "all of this adds up to our need for a Savior because we, clearly, cannot save ourselves". And this is exactly what chapter 7 is about. "The good news is that God has looked upon our situation and has acted on our behalf. God has come to us. God has come to us in Jesus Christ, God's eternal Son, to do for us what we could never do for ourselves - to save us."[1] The study of God's salvific activity is called *christology*. Christology lays out for the Church how we understand God's work in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Christology proclaims that *in* and *through* all of this Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Anointed One, the *Christ*. Christology dives into the *how*, the mechanics of salvation.

In order for Jesus', the Christ's, salvific work to be efficacious Jesus *must* be both fully God and fully human. "Jesus must be 'truly God' in order to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves: save us … Jesus must be 'truly human' in order to be identified completely with humanity."[2] As discussed in the previous chapter, try as we might, we humans are never able to choose the good 100% of the time. We are never able to successfully choose God and one another over ourselves 100% of the time. Jesus was able. In his full fidelity to God, Jesus in his human condition "covers" for the rest of us. In that we are "covered" (see 1 Peter 4:8) "forgiveness has occurred, and reconciliation is accomplished"[3]. The theological term for this is *atonement*.

There is much subject matter that falls under the auspices of Christology that is covered in greater depth than a Sunday sermon could possibly hope to cover. Forgiveness, reconciliation, liberation, expiation, redemption, and justification are all theological matters that fall specifically within the field of Christology. We are forgiven of our selfish inclinations. We are reconciled, put back into right relationship with God and with one another. We are liberated from Sin's stranglehold on us to always choose ourselves. Expiation means that Christ's sacrifice and Christ's holiness is accepted by God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, on our behalf. "God accepts Christ's holiness as the sacrifice for our sins."[4] Redemption means that, in Christ, our disobedience has been adjudicated. What is our downfall has been exchanged for being uplifted. Justification means that "by faith, we accept this work of Christ as being done for us, on our behalf"[5]. Resurrection means that death has been overcome; death has been defeated. That which would threaten permanent separation from the Living God is no longer a viable threat. It also demonstrates God's power. The same power that raised Christ from the dead is sufficient to raise each one of us as well.

Christology points out that it is not just about what Jesus taught and said, but that it is also about how Jesus lived and walked. In his role (*office*) as prophet, like the prophets of old, "Jesus announced the will and purposes of God"[6] and he taught about who God is and what God expects of us (see Matt. 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28). In his role as priest Jesus makes sacrifice on our behalf; the sacrifice being himself. In his role as king Jesus governs us and it is to him whom our allegiance, obedience, and loyalty is due. "Jesus was a prophet throughout his life and ministry; he was a priest in his suffering (passion) and death; he is king through his resurrection and ascension."[7] Christology seeks to explain all of who Jesus is, what Jesus did, and what Jesus continues to do in and through each one of us.

In Christ's Service,
Pastor Eddie

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[1]McKim, Donald K. Presbyterian Beliefs: A Brief Introduction - Revised Edition. Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, KY; 2017. p51
[2]ibid, pp52-53
[3]ibid, p54
[4]ibid, p57
[5]ibid, p58
[6]ibid, p62
[7]ibid, p63